

Exhibiting at CTC5

by Carol Billings

In early September, as I prepared to return home from CTC5, the Fifth Court Technology Conference put on by the National Center for State Courts in Detroit, I decided I would like to share some of my thoughts about the experience. I ran into no more than a dozen law librarians in the sea of about 2500 judges, court administrators, clerks, and technology staffers. The conference programs were for the most part quite good, but as with the AALL Annual Meeting, perhaps the most important advantage of being there was the opportunity to meet and exchange ideas with other participants.

First of all, since modesty prevents two AALL colleagues from doing it themselves, I want to sing the praises of **Marcia Koslov** and **Michele Finerty**, who worked very hard to do our profession proud at CTC5. In a line-up of 33 speakers, Marcia was the only law librarian and one of only five women. Her one-woman presentation, "Citations in Cyberspace," was superb. A large audience that entered actively into the question-and-answer period witnessed Marcia's tour de force, 75-minute summary of the entire citation debate. Her talk was enhanced by excellent audio-visual aids presented with PowerPoint—something that I hope will become more common at AALL's Annual Meeting. The comments and questions from the audience revealed that there are still many of our brethren in the judicial community who have a great deal to learn about citation issues. AALL needs to work closely with court technology experts to alleviate the fears of judges and clerks who think that citation reforms are too difficult and disruptive to accomplish.

The second AALL colleague whom I wish to praise is Michele Finerty, who represented the AALL's Information Technology and Implementation Working Group at its exhibit hall booth. Cathy Lemann's article in this issue details the adventures that she and Michele had as exhibitors. Observing Michele as she smiled and charmed visitors all day at her booth after rising at the crack of dawn, dragging heaps of materials to the Cobo Center, and struggling to get her computer and exhibits set up, made me feel very proud.

The Working Group, like PLL members who have exhibited at the Association of Legal Administrators' meetings, is performing a very important service for our profession—spreading the word about what law librarians do better than

anyone else in the legal community. I truly think we have underestimated our power and that judges, administrators, and lawyers are enthusiastic about learning from us when we give them the chance. The Working Group certainly deserves our support, both financial and physical, as it continues its efforts to advise courts and law-related institutions on technology issues. AALL should, I believe, put more resources into our travelling exhibit booth and targeted hand-out materials. Currently we tend to look like the poor relation next to the elaborate displays of commercial vendors. We also need to try to provide back-up support in each city where our members are exhibiting. Although Michele and Cathy each had some volunteer help, they certainly performed the lion's share of setting up, manning the booth for many hours, and packing up.

Finally, for those of you who have never attended the convention of a law-related group other than AALL, I want you to know that we put on a fabulous convention. CTC5 was excellent, but the AALL Annual Meeting is every bit as good! Our registration fee is lower, our exhibit hall is bigger and livelier, our members are more enthusiastic, and we have more fun.

As President-Elect Jim Heller and Program Selection Chair Tim Coggins (who also chairs the Working Group with Michele Finerty) start to put together the National Conference for the Washington Annual Meeting in 1999, I hope that AALL members will give them their strong support.

The opportunity that the conference will provide for law librarians to "show their stuff" and share their expertise with other members of the legal community is too good to miss.

CTC5 concentrated on teaching judicial folks how technology can help their courts to run more efficiently and cost-effectively. AALL has an important message for that audience as well. As the main luncheon speaker, Dr. Shoshana Zuboff (Harvard Business School) emphasized, the element that is too often ignored when technology is implemented is the human element. Zuboff gently chastised CTC5 for not including more programs that focused on the "consumer" of legal services. She insisted that we must move from "administering to ministering." When it comes to service, law librarians are the experts! We need to take the lead in showing others in the legal community how it's done while learning more about their needs at the same time.

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